

New Hampshire Volunteer Lake Assessment Program

2003 Interim Report for Lake Monomonac Rindge



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Water Division
Watershed Management Bureau
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OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

After reviewing data collected from **LAKE MONOMONAC, RINDGE**, the program coordinators have made the following observations and recommendations:

Your association sampled the deep spot and the inlets for the basic VLAP sampling parameters (phosphorus, pH, conductivity, and turbidity) once this summer. Your association also sampled many locations for bacteria on two additional sampling events. We would like to encourage the association to sample the deep spot and the tributaries for the basic VLAP sampling parameters more than once each summer.

Typically we recommend that associations sample the deep spots and the inlets (just prior to where they meet the lake) three times per summer (once in June, July, and August). We understand that the number of sampling events you decide to conduct per summer will depend upon volunteer availability, and your associations' water monitoring goals and funding availability. However, with a limited amount of data it is difficult to determine accurate and representative lake quality trends. Since weather patterns and activity in the watershed can change throughout the summer, from year to year, and even from hour to hour during a rain event, it is a good idea to sample at least once per month over the course of the season. Furthermore, with the recent problems with milfoil and the generally large size of the lake, it would be beneficial to include additional sampling events.

As you are aware, the Franklin Pierce College (FPC) satellite VLAP laboratory was not able analyze samples during the 2003 sampling season. This was largely due to personnel and budget issues at the college. Although the FPC laboratory was not able to analyze samples, staff at FPC continued to lend out sampling equipment to volunteer monitors in this area. This was truly a cooperative effort between DES, FPC, and the volunteer monitors in this region. We want to thank you again for bearing with us this season. Also, we want to assure you that DES and FPC are working together to get the FPC lab up and running for the 2004 sampling season. We will keep you posted on the status of the laboratory as the sampling season approaches.

FIGURE INTERPRETATION

- **Figure 1 and Table 1:** The graphs in Figure 1 (Appendix A) show the historical and current year chlorophyll-a concentration in the water column. Table 1 (Appendix B) lists the maximum, minimum, and mean concentration for each sampling season that the lake/pond has been monitored through the program.

Chlorophyll-a, a pigment naturally found in plants, is an indicator of the algal abundance. Because algae are usually microscopic plants that contain chlorophyll-a, and are naturally found in lake ecosystems, the chlorophyll-a concentration measured in the water gives an estimation of the algal concentration or lake productivity. **The mean (average) summer chlorophyll-a concentration for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 7.02 mg/m³.**

The current year data (the top graph) show that the chlorophyll-a concentration in June was **less than** the state mean.

Overall, visual inspection of the historical data trend line (the bottom graph) shows a **variable** in-lake chlorophyll-a trend, meaning that the concentration has **fluctuated** since monitoring began in 1987. In the 2004 annual report, we will again conduct a statistical analysis of the historical data to objectively determine if there has been a significant change in the annual mean chlorophyll-a concentration since monitoring began. As your monitoring group expands its sampling program in the future, we will be able to discern long-term trends with more accuracy and confidence.

While algae are naturally present in all lakes/ponds, an excessive or increasing amount of any type is not welcomed. In freshwater lakes/ponds, phosphorus is the nutrient that algae depend upon for growth. Algal concentrations may increase with an increase in nonpoint sources of phosphorus loading from the watershed, or in-lake sources of phosphorus loading (such as phosphorus releases from the sediments). Therefore, it is extremely important for volunteer monitors to continually educate residents about how activities within the watershed can affect phosphorus loading and lake/pond quality.

- **Figure 2 and Table 3:** The graphs in Figure 2 (Appendix A) show historical and current year data for lake/pond transparency. Table 3 (Appendix B) lists the maximum, minimum and mean transparency data for each sampling season that the lake/pond has been monitored through the program.

Volunteer monitors use the Secchi-disk, a 20 cm disk with alternating black and white quadrants, to measure water clarity (how far a person can see into the water). Transparency, a measure of water clarity, can be affected by the amount of algae and sediment from erosion, as well as the natural colors of the water. **The mean (average) summer transparency for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 3.7 meters.**

The current year data (the top graph) show that the in-lake transparency in June was **less than** the state mean.

Overall, visual inspection of the historical data trend line (the bottom graph) shows a **variable** trend for in-lake transparency, meaning that the transparency has **fluctuated** since monitoring began. As discussed previously, in the 2004 annual report, we will conduct a statistical analysis of the historical data to objectively determine if there has been a significant change in the annual mean transparency since monitoring began.

Typically, high intensity rainfall causes erosion of sediments into lakes/ponds and streams, thus decreasing clarity. Efforts should continually be made to stabilize stream banks, lake/pond shorelines, disturbed soils within the watershed, and especially dirt roads located immediately adjacent to the edge of tributaries and the lake/pond. Guides to Best Management Practices designed to reduce, and possibly even eliminate, nonpoint source pollutants, such as sediment loading, are available from DES upon request.

- **Figure 3 and Table 8:** The graphs in Figure 3 (Appendix A) show the amounts of phosphorus in the epilimnion (the upper layer) and the hypolimnion (the lower layer); the inset graphs show current year data. Table 8 (Appendix B) lists the annual maximum, minimum, and median concentration for each deep spot layer and each tributary since the lake/pond has joined the program.

Phosphorus is the limiting nutrient for plant and algae growth in New Hampshire's freshwater lakes and ponds. Too much phosphorus in a lake/pond can lead to increases in plant and algal growth over time. **The median summer total phosphorus concentration in the epilimnion (upper layer) of New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 11 ug/L. The median summer phosphorus concentration in the hypolimnion (lower layer) is 14 ug/L.**

The current year data for the epilimnion (the top inset graph) show that the phosphorus concentration in June was **slightly greater than** the state median.

The current year data for the hypolimnion (the bottom inset graph) show that the phosphorus concentration in June was ***much greater than*** the state median. Specifically, the June hypolimnetic concentration was **68 ug/L**, which is ***very high***, and is the ***highest*** phosphorus reading since monitoring began. The turbidity of the sample was *not* elevated (0.9 NTUs), which suggests that the lake bottom was *not* disturbed while sampling.

Overall, visual inspection of the historical data trend line for the epilimnion and the hypolimnion shows a ***variable*** phosphorus trend since monitoring began.

One of the most important approaches to reducing phosphorus loading to a waterbody is to continually educate watershed residents about its sources and how excessive amounts can adversely impact the ecology and value of lakes and ponds. Phosphorus sources within a lake or pond's watershed typically include septic systems, animal waste, lawn fertilizer, road and construction erosion, and natural wetlands.

TABLE INTERPRETATION

➤ **Table 2: Phytoplankton**

Table 2 (Appendix B) lists the current and historical phytoplankton species observed in the lake/pond. The dominant phytoplankton species observed in the June plankton sample were ***Dinobryon (a golden-brown algae)***, ***Synura (a golden-brown algae)***, and ***Asterionella (a diatom)***.

Phytoplankton populations undergo a natural succession during the growing season (Please refer to the "Biological Monitoring Parameters" section of this report for a more detailed explanation regarding seasonal plankton succession). Diatoms and golden-brown algae are typical in New Hampshire's less productive lakes and ponds.

➤ **Table 2: Cyanobacteria (Blue-green algae)**

A small amount of the cyanobacterium ***Anabaena*** and ***Microcystis*** was observed in the plankton sample. ***These species, if present in large amounts, can be toxic to livestock, wildlife, pets, and humans.***

Cyanobacteria can reach nuisance levels when excessive nutrients and favorable environmental conditions occur. During September of 2003, a few lakes and ponds in the southern portion of the state experienced cyanobacteria blooms. This was likely due to nutrient

loading to these waterbodies. As mentioned previously, many weeks during the Spring and Summer of 2003 were rainy, which likely resulted in a large amount of nutrient loading to surface waters.

The presence of cyanobacteria serves as a reminder of the lake's/pond's delicate balance. Watershed residents should continue to act proactively to reduce nutrient loading into the lake/pond by eliminating fertilizer use on lawns, keeping the lake/pond shoreline natural, re-vegetating cleared areas within the watershed, and properly maintaining septic systems and roads.

In addition, residents should also observe the lake/pond in September and October during the time of fall turnover (lake mixing) to document any algal blooms that may occur. Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) have the ability to regulate their depth in the water column by producing or releasing gas from vesicles. However, occasionally lake mixing can affect their buoyancy and cause them to rise to the surface and bloom. Wind and currents tend to "pile" cyanobacteria into scums that accumulate in one section of the lake/pond. If a fall bloom occurs, please contact the VLAP Coordinator.

➤ **Table 4: pH**

Table 4 (Appendix B) presents the in-lake and tributary current year and historical pH data.

pH is measured on a logarithmic scale of 0 (acidic) to 14 (basic). pH is important to the survival and reproduction of fish and other aquatic life. A pH below 5.5 severely limits the growth and reproduction of fish. A pH between 6.5 and 7.0 is ideal for fish. The mean pH value for the epilimnion (upper layer) in New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is **6.5**, which indicates that the surface waters in state are slightly acidic. For a more detailed explanation regarding pH, please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report.

The mean pH at the deep spot this season ranged from **5.69** in the hypolimnion to **6.07** in the epilimnion, which means that the water is ***slightly acidic***. When organic matter near the lake bottom is decomposed, acidic by-products are produced, which likely explains the lower pH (meaning higher acidity) in the hypolimnion.

Due to the presence of granite bedrock in the state and the deposition of acid rain, there is not much that can be done to effectively increase lake/pond pH.

➤ **Table 5: Acid Neutralizing Capacity**

Table 5 (Appendix B) presents the current year and historical epilimnetic ANC for each year the lake/pond has been monitored through VLAP.

Buffering capacity or ANC describes the ability of a solution to resist changes in pH by neutralizing the acidic input to the lake. The mean ANC value for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is **6.7 mg/L**, which indicates that many lakes and ponds in the state are "highly sensitive" to acidic inputs. For a more detailed explanation, please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report.

The Acid Neutralizing Capacity (ANC) of the epilimnion (the upper layer) continued to remain ***much less than*** the state mean. Specifically, the ANC in June was **0.40 mg/L**, which indicates that the lake/pond is ***critically sensitive*** to acidic inputs (such as acid precipitation).

➤ **Table 6: Conductivity**

Table 6 (Appendix B) presents the current and historical conductivity values for tributaries and in-lake data. Conductivity is the numerical expression of the ability of water to carry an electric current. The mean conductivity value for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is **62.1 uMhos/cm**. For a more detailed explanation, please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report.

The conductivity has ***increased*** in the lake/pond and inlets since monitoring began. In addition, the in-lake conductivity is ***greater than*** the state mean. Typically, sources of increased conductivity are due to human activity. These activities include septic systems that fail and leak leachate into the groundwater (and eventually into the tributaries and the lake/pond), agricultural runoff, and road runoff (which contains road salt during the spring snow melt). New development in the watershed can alter runoff patterns and expose new soil and bedrock areas, which could contribute to increasing conductivity. In addition, natural sources, such as iron deposits in bedrock, can influence conductivity.

We recommend that your monitoring group conduct stream surveys and storm event sampling along the inlet(s) with elevated conductivity so that we can determine what may be causing the increases.

For a detailed explanation on how to conduct rain event and stream surveys, please refer to the 2002 VLAP Annual Report "Special Topic Article", or contact the VLAP Coordinator.

➤ **Table 8: Total Phosphorus**

Table 8 (Appendix B) presents the current year and historical total phosphorus data for in-lake and tributary stations. Phosphorus is the nutrient that limits the algae's ability to grow and reproduce. Please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

The phosphorus concentration in the inlet samples was **relatively low** on the June sampling event. However, many of the inlets have had **elevated** and **fluctuating** phosphorus concentrations during prior sampling seasons. As discussed previously, since weather patterns and activity in the watershed can change throughout the summer, from year to year, and even from hour to hour during a rain event, it is a good idea to sample the lake and the tributaries for phosphorus during June, July, and August.

➤ **Table 9 and Table 10: Dissolved Oxygen and Temperature Data**

Table 9 (Appendix B) shows the dissolved oxygen/temperature profile(s) for the 2003 sampling season. Table 10 (Appendix B) shows the historical and current year dissolved oxygen concentration in the hypolimnion (lower layer). The presence of dissolved oxygen is vital to fish and amphibians in the water column and also to bottom-dwelling organisms. Please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

The dissolved oxygen concentration was **high** at all depths sampled at the deep spot of the lake/pond. Typically, shallow lakes and ponds that are not deep enough to stratify into more than one or two layers will have relatively high amounts of oxygen at all depths. This is due to continual lake mixing and diffusion of oxygen into the bottom waters induced by wind and wave action.

➤ **Table 11: Turbidity**

Table 11 (Appendix B) lists the current year and historical data for in-lake and tributary turbidity. Turbidity in the water is caused by suspended matter, such as clay, silt, and algae. Water clarity is strongly influenced by turbidity. Please refer to the "Other Monitoring Parameters" section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

The turbidity in the inlet and deep spot samples was **relatively low**.

➤ **Table 12: Bacteria (*E.coli*)**

Table 12 lists the current year data for bacteria (*E.coli*) testing. *E. coli* is a normal bacterium found in the large intestine of humans and

other warm-blooded animals. *E.coli* is used as an indicator organism because it is easily cultured and its presence in the water, in defined amounts, indicates that sewage **MAY** be present. If sewage is present in the water, potentially harmful disease-causing organisms **MAY** also be present.

Many *E.coli* samples were taken throughout the lake on the June 30, August 6, and August 14 sampling events. Overall, most of the *E.coli* results were **less than** the state standards which is good news!

The *E.coli* concentration in the **Landano** sample collected on the August 6 was **elevated** at 160 counts per 100 mL; however, this concentration was still **less than** the state standard of 406 counts per 100 mL for recreational waters that are not designated beaches. On the August 14 sampling event, this site was re-tested, and the *E.coli* concentration in the sample was **low** (less than 10 counts per 100 mL).

If your group is particularly concerned about bacteria levels at any of the sampling locations, we recommend that *E.coli* testing be conducted on a weekend during heavy recreational use on the lake, when large populations of waterfowl are visiting the lake, or after a rain event. Since *E.coli* die quickly in cool pond waters, testing is most accurate and most representative of the health risk to bathers when the source (humans, animals, or waterfowl) is present.

For a detailed explanation on how to conduct rain event sampling, please refer to the 2002 VLAP Annual Report "Special Topic Article", or contact the VLAP Coordinator.

DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CONTROL

Annual Assessment Audit:

During the annual visit to your lake/pond, the biologist conducted a "Sampling Procedures Assessment Audit" for your monitoring group. Specifically, the biologist observed the performance of your monitoring group while sampling and filled out an assessment audit sheet to document the ability of the volunteer monitors to follow the proper field sampling procedures (as outlined in the VLAP Monitor's Field Manual). This assessment is used to identify any aspects of sample collection in which volunteer monitors are not following the proper procedures, and also provides an opportunity for the biologist to retrain the volunteer monitors as necessary. This will ultimately ensure that the samples that the volunteer monitors collect are truly representative of actual lake and tributary conditions.

Overall, your monitoring group performed **very well** while collecting samples on the annual biologist visit this season! Specifically, the members of your monitoring group followed the majority of the proper field sampling procedures. The biologist did identify a few aspects regarding sample collection that the volunteer monitors could improve upon.

- **Finding the deep spot:** Please remember to locate the deep spot using three reference points from the shoreline. This method is known as **triangulation**. In addition, depth finders and Global Positioning System (GPS) technology may be used to further pinpoint the location of the deep spot. In addition, please remember to check the depth of the deep spot by **sounding** to ensure that you have actually located the deepest spot. To sound the bottom, simply fill the Kemmerer bottle with lake water from the surface and then lower the bottle into the lake until you feel it touch the bottom. When you have reached the bottom, check the depth on the calibrated chain. You may need to move to another location and repeat this procedure a few times until the deepest spot is located. When you have found the deep spot, please remember to write the depth of the field data sheet. **Sounding may disturb the sediment, so please allow the bottom to settle out before collecting the deepest sample or collect this sample away from the sounded location.**
- **Anchoring at deep spot:** Please remember to use an anchor with sufficient weight and sufficient amount of rope to prevent the boat from drifting while sampling at the deep spot. It is difficult for the biologist to collect an accurate and representative dissolved oxygen/temperature profile when the boat is drifting. In addition, it is difficult to view the secchi disk and collect samples from the proper depths when the boat is drifting. Depending on the depth of the lake/pond and the wind conditions, it may be necessary to use two anchors!

Sample Receipt Checklist:

Each time your monitoring group dropped off samples at the laboratory this summer, the laboratory staff completed a sample receipt checklist to assess and document if the volunteer monitors followed proper sampling techniques when collecting the samples. The purpose of the sample receipt checklist is to minimize, and hopefully eliminate, future re-occurrences of improper sampling techniques.

Overall, the sample receipt checklist showed that your monitoring group did a **very good** job when collecting samples this season! Specifically,

the members of your monitoring group followed the majority of the proper field sampling procedures when collecting and submitting samples to the laboratory. However, the laboratory did identify a few aspects of sample collection that the volunteer monitors could improve upon.

- **Station Identification:** Each time your group submits samples to the laboratory, please include a sampling map that identifies each sampling location and station name. This will help DES to interpret the results and to classify the data.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Best Management Practices to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution: A Guide for Citizens and Town Officials, NHDES-WD 97-8, NHDES Booklet, (603) 271-3503.

Camp Road Maintenance Manual: A Guide for Landowners. Kennebec Soil and Water Conservation District, 1992, (207) 287-3901.

Cyanobacteria in New Hampshire Waters Potential Dangers of Blue-Green Algae Blooms, NHDES Fact Sheet, (603) 271-3505, or www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wmb/wmb-10.htm.

Erosion Control for Construction in the Protected Shoreland Buffer Zone, WD-SP-1, NHDES Fact Sheet, (603) 271-3503 or www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/sp/sp-1.htm

Impacts of Development Upon Stormwater Runoff, WD-WQE-7, NHDES Fact Sheet, (603) 271-3503, or www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wqe/wqe-7.htm

Lake Protection Tips: Some Do's and Don'ts for Maintaining Healthy Lakes, WD-BB-9, NHDES Fact Sheet, (603) 271-3503 or www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-9.htm.

Management of Canada Geese in Suburban Areas: A Guide to the Basics, Draft Report, NJ Department of Environmental Protection Division of Watershed Management, March 2001, www.state.nj.us/dep/watershedmgt/DOCS/BMP_DOCS/Goosedraft.pdf.

Proper Lawn Care In the Protected Shoreland, The Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act, WD-SP-2, NHDES Fact Sheet, (603) 271-3503 or www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/sp/sp-2.htm.

Road Salt and Water Quality, WD-WMB-4, NHDES Fact Sheet, (603) 271-3503 or www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/wmb/wmb-4.htm.

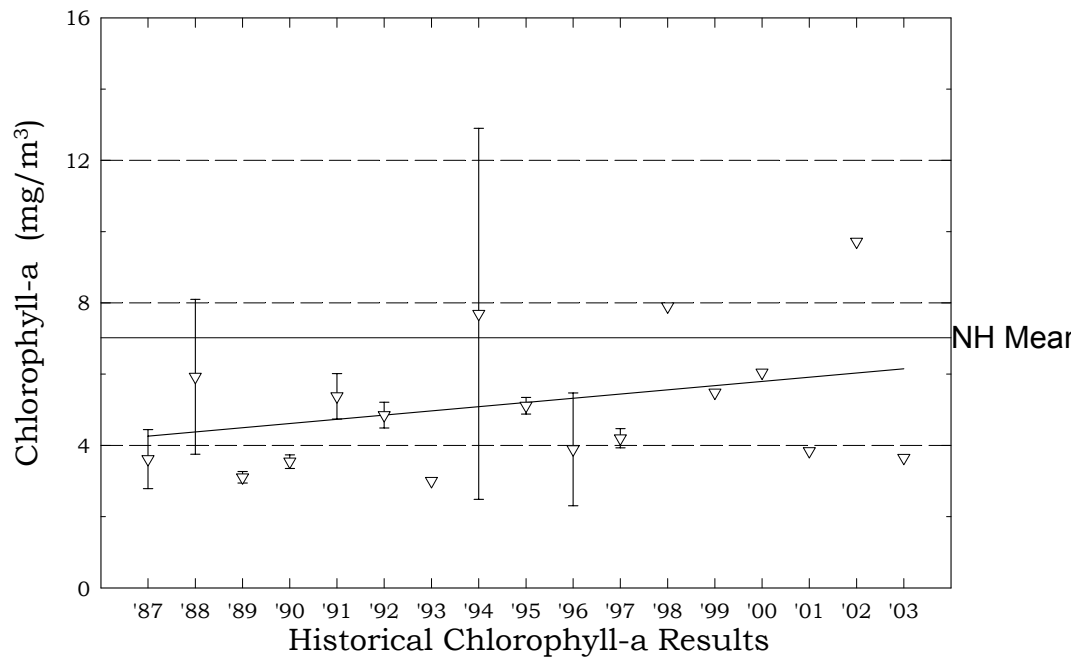
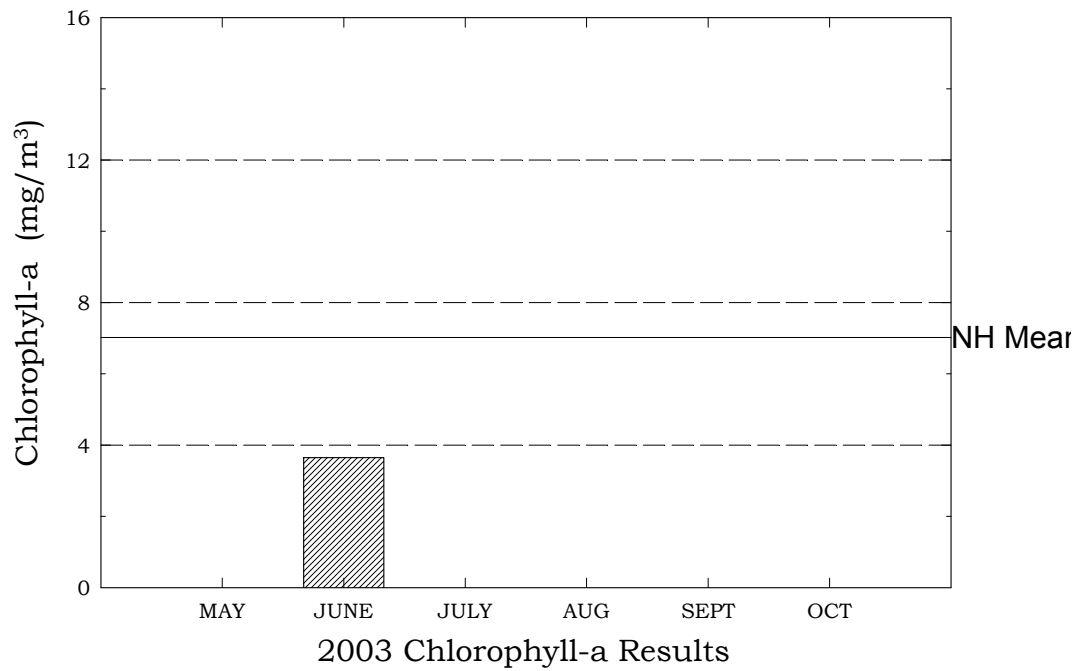
Sand Dumping - Beach Construction, WD-BB-15, NHDES Fact Sheet, (603) 271-3503 or www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/bb/bb-15.htm.

APPENDIX A

GRAPHS

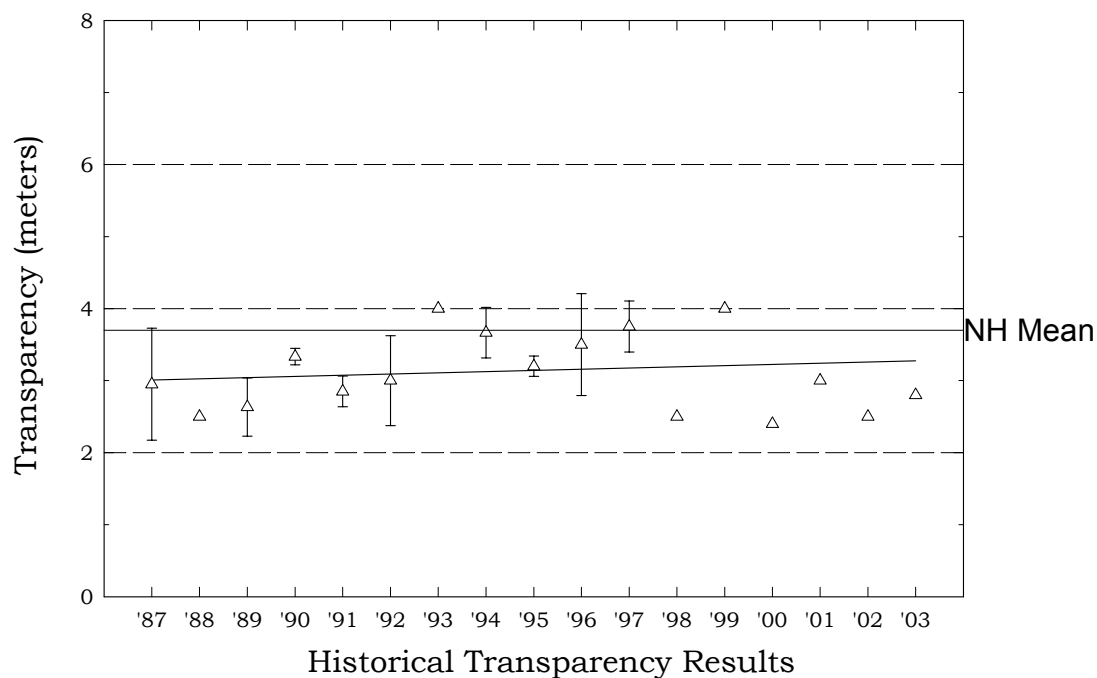
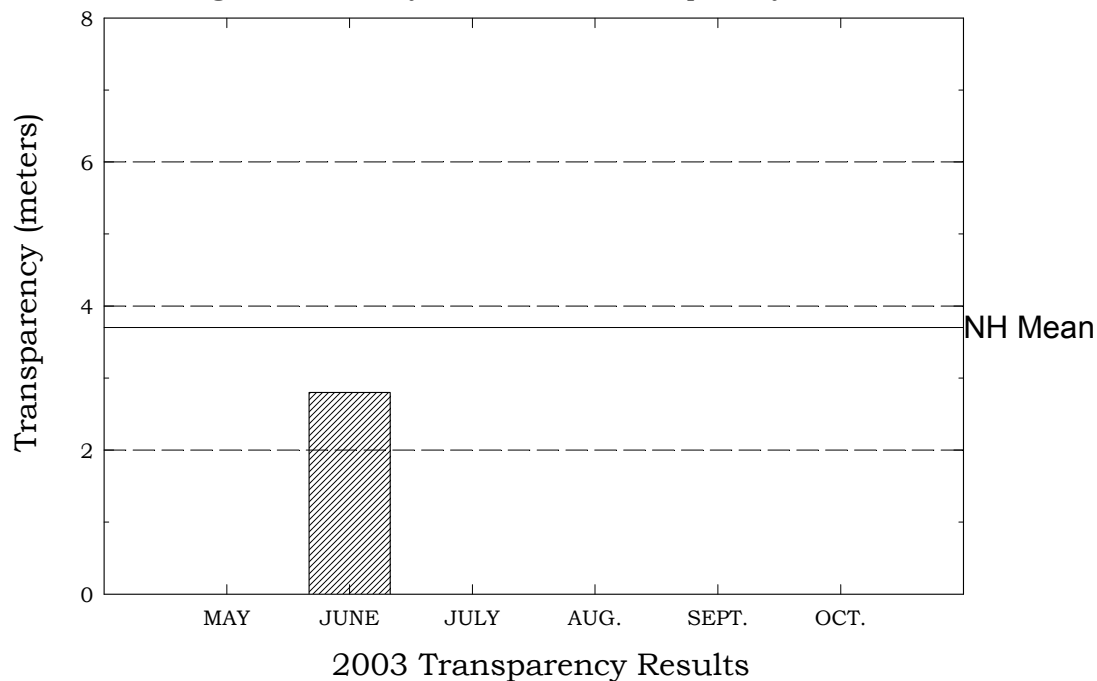
Lake Monomonac, Rindge

Figure 1. Monthly and Historical Chlorophyll-a Results



Lake Monomonac, Rindge

Figure 2. Monthly and Historical Transparency Results



Lake Monomonac, Rindge

Figure 3. Monthly and Historical Total Phosphorus Data.

